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Weekly Surveyor

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TSWS-2/75

13 January 1975

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WEEKLY SURVEYOR

USSR & EASTERN EUROPE

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ration field, but such research is more likely an interest by one man and his group rather than any large scale effort.

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Soviet announcement that the unit has started generating electric power. It is likely that the announcement refers to the reactor's attaining criticality and undergoing low power testing.

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MISCELLANEOUS

A Technical Committee of the International Electrotechnical Commission voted to adopt an interface standard for interconnection of digital and programmable instruments. It will take several years, however, to design and market large numbers of standardized instruments which will lead to increased use of programmable systems.

5X1

CHINA

Chinese are conducting research in the laser isotope separation field, but such research is more likely an interest by one man and his group rather than any large scale effort.

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OSI-TSWS-2/75
13 Jan 75

NUCLEAR ENERGY

Soviets Announce the Start-up of Unit 2 at the Kola Nuclear Power Station (AES): The second generating unit of the Kola AES in the polar region has started generating electric power. The rated power of the second unit is the same as that of the first, 440 megawatts electric (MWe). Construction is under way on two additional 440-MWe units at this site.

25X1

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PHYSICAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGIES

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Comment: This is the first evidence of Chinese research in the laser isotope separation field, but it is more likely an interest by one man and his group rather than any large scale effort.

25X1

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A New International Standard for Instruments: In September 1974, a Technical Committee of the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) voted to adopt an interface standard for interconnection of digital and programmable

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instruments. The new standard, based on a proposal by the Hewlett-Packard Company, specifies key interface parameters such as number and function of signal lines, logic conventions, control functions, and signal format. It applies to systems of low and medium complexity, with up to fifteen interconnected instruments, typically controlled by a microprocessor or programmable calculator.

25X1

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Comment: Although the new standard will eliminate major incompatibility among instruments, it will not guarantee full, plug-in compatibility. The Technical Committee was not able to agree on a standard for the physical connector, and the standard does not specify the data code or digit sequence (i.e., Most Significant or Least Significant Digit first). Committee participants anticipate agreement on a connector standard soon, however, and de facto standards for the code and digit sequence probably will evolve if the IEC does not establish them.

The new standard will have little immediate effect since it will take several years to design and market large numbers of standardized instruments. The gradually increasing availability of such instruments and the ease of interconnecting them, however, will increase the use of instrumentation systems and improve the productivity of laboratory research and development, and production and maintenance testing.

The US will benefit economically from increased sales competition as the new standard comes into general use. Instrument system users will be able to select the component units on a worldwide basis with minimal constraints of incompatibility. US imports of instruments may increase in areas where foreign companies can better meet a specific need or offer a price advantage. US exports and sales by overseas subsidiaries should more than offset imports since the US is currently the world's largest and most diversified producer of electronic instruments. The net long range effect of the new standard on the US balance of payments should be favorable.

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Next 7 Page(s) In Document Exempt